

1 February 2012

Re: Hearing on Social Security Death Master File

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input to the discussion about the accessibility of the Social Security Death Master File (SSDI). I am a professional genealogist and also do family history research for my own family. I have used the Social Security Death Index on CD-ROM and the Internet for nearly 20 years. It is extremely valuable for tracking family migrations and identifying what happened to people after they "disappear" from the family. The Social Security Death Index is often the only key that can open up doors to additional publically available information, such as obituaries and death records, when applicable.

I ask that you do not restrict public access to the SSDI. American families are relying on it to help discover and reconstruct their family histories.

Also, I know that organizations such as universities and churches use it to update their alumni and membership lists when members move away and the organization is not informed of their death. And heirship attorneys use the SSDI to help track down potential heirs to estates.

The value of keeping the SSDI a public record is immense and it must be preserved.

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